

UNITED STATES ARMY CHAPLAIN CENTER AND SCHOOL

THE CHAPLAIN ASSISTANT AS OFFICE MANAGER

TECHNIQUES OF RESEARCH
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I INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt in my mind the enlisted member of the chaplain team is vital to the success or failure of the chaplain section. I am also convinced many chaplains have not fully appreciated the importance of this member of the team. There have been enlisted assistants who have contributed to this attitude by their performance. However I maintain the principle person involved in the creation of unhappy and unproductive assistants, in many instances, is the chaplain. All too frequently the chaplain has misused his assistant or has limited what his assistant is allowed to do. This creates an assistant who is unhappy in his job and, therefore, will live up to the expectations of the chaplain.

This paper is concerned with more than encouraging the chaplain to use his assistant better. It is an attempt to support proposed changes in the career field of the enlisted chaplain assistant. In order to do that we will talk about entrance requirements, proposed role expansion, training and continuing education, job utilization, and identify and discuss problem areas.

II ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

The present situation as far as educational and aptitude requirements for entrance into this career field are clearly spelled out in Army regulations.¹ An individual does not have to be a high school graduate, but he must possess a fairly high mental ability, viz., a GT of 90 or more.² In addition he must have an aptitude for the clerical field, be of high moral character and be able to acquire a military drivers permit.³

When we look to the future this aspect remains vital. The personnel who gathered in Europe for the USAREUR and Seventh Army Chaplain Assistant Training Conference were concerned with it. Among other requirements they suggested for entry into this field one recommendation was that the individual must be a high school graduate.⁴ This fall I interviewed four senior NCO's in the 71M field and I asked them about this. They were of the opinion a high school diploma should not be a requirement. What was important was the individual's mental ability. Any reduction in this would reap nothing but problems for all concerned.⁵

¹ U.S., Department of the Army, Enlisted Military Occupational Specialties, AR 611-201 (15 JUN 72), pp. 799-801.

² Interview with Chaplain (MAJ) Joel A. Andrews, USACHCS, Ft. Hamilton, Brooklyn, New York, 26 September 1973.

³ U.S., Enlisted Specialties, pp. 799-800.

⁴ USAREUR and Seventh Army, Annual Chaplain Assistant Training Conference, (APO NY 09403, March 1973), Incl #1 to #1.

⁵ Interview with NCO's attending NCOES Advanced Course, USACHCS, Ft. Hamilton, Brooklyn, New York, 26 September 1973.

As I analyze this I would support the latter point of view. A high school diploma may indicate a person has the needed ability or it may not. And if the Army would limit entry into this field to only high school graduates it would miss some very talented people. There are circumstances that can preclude an individual from gaining this diploma and he should not be punished for that. I do believe, however, that any reduction in mental ability ability and moral character would be tragic. Therefore, as a minimum requirement I would suggest a GT of 100 or more. This was in existence until recently when it dropped to 90. In my opinion this is totally unacceptable if we expect to maintain and build up this career field in the Army.

III PROPOSED ROLE EXPANSION

Before looking at future training and continuing education we need to look at the proposed change in the 71M career field as propounded by the Office of The Chief of Chaplains. In this proposal there would be available four tracks an individual could take after initial selection and training. These four tracks are Religious Education Specialist, Church Management Specialist, Religious Activities Specialist, and Non-Professional Counselor.⁶ It also proposes adding an additional skill level to the present levels of 20 and 50, viz., skill level 40. The track of Religious Activities Specialist would merge with the Church Management Specialist at the 50 skill level. All of these tracks can lead to the highest levels of management for the NCO. This proposal is timely, needed, and incorporates many recommendations from chaplain assistants, commanders, chaplains, and civilian church officials.⁷

⁶ U.S., Department of The Army, Office of The Chief of Chaplains, "Proposal for a New Religious Support Career Management Sub-Field," Washington, D.C., 1973, (Mimeographed).

⁷ Ibid.

IV EXPANDED TRAINING AND EDUCATION

This proposal incorporates the desires of many people and of necessity contains the suggestion for a more organized and high powered training and education effort for the enlisted assistant than in the past. The desire and need for such a change has been underscored in my interview with the NCO's at the NCOES Advanced Course,⁸ and as stated in the report of the USAREUR and Seventh Army Chaplain's Assistant Annual Training Conference.⁹

The proposal from the Office of The Chief of Chaplains specifically lays out the training envisioned if the proposal is adopted. For skill level 20 there would not be much change from the present situation as seen in the following:

Entrance requirements/training continues to use the 71B training base. Persons accepted in this program are required to have basic typing skills or have the capability to be trained in clerical skills. In addition, current enlisted training, as conducted at the US Army Chaplain School, must expand to reflect this new concept of operation. Special background skills in each speciality is desirable, but not required. The MGS training builds on pre-enlistment skills.¹⁰

For the added skill level of 40 the training envisioned would be as follows:

⁸ Interview of NCO's, USAGHCS, 26 September 1973.

⁹ USAREUR and Seventh Army, Annual Conference, Incl #1 to #1.

¹⁰ U.S., Chief of Chaplains, (Mimeographed).

The training required is comparable to the NCOES Basic Course currently available. However, unlike the 71M program, the course concentrates on developing program managers/coordinators and NCO's possessing inter-personal skills. Further, short course training in programs like Clinical Pastoral Education, Basic Human Interaction, and Church Management are required to facilitate the development of individual skills.¹¹

And for skill level 50 we read:

Training continues on the level with current Army-wide NCOES Advance Course programs. However, it is specially tailored to meet the needs of the roles identified (previously). Additionally, short course training is required and it is possible at this level to foresee a valid requirement for advanced degrees.¹²

It is clear from this that continuing training and education of the 71M is seen as needing improvement. It is crucial with our present system and it becomes imperative if the new proposal ever becomes policy.

Many good programs have been happening in the chaplain's continuing education but little has happened with the enlisted member of the team. Perhaps we can incorporate them into some of our workshops and short term educational experiences until better things happen for them. One such example was suggested by the NCO's attending the NCOES Advanced Course this fall. It was felt that it would hve been good to have had them involved with the advance class of chaplain students the first two weeks of their course. These two weeks were with the National Training Laboratories personnel and then in Group Process Planning. If we are really interested in building up the effectiveness and efficiency of the chaplain team we have no choice but to provide enlightened and bold programs of education for all members of the team.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

V JOB UTILIZATION

The next area of consideration is vital to enhancing the attitude, productivity and tenure of the enlisted member of the team. It has to do with job utilization. If a man has all the necessary qualifications and training and then is not allowed to do what he has been taught to do we have a potential problem on our hands. Let's look at it this way. If a clergyman has all the expertise to be an effective preacher and is never given the opportunity to preach I suspect he will have a definite attitude problem. I suspect he will go somewhere where his talents and training will be used.

In essence this is happening now with the enlisted member of the chaplain's team. I heard these comments from the NCO's. One said, "If we are going to be called Chaplain Administrators then we should be allowed to work in that capacity."¹³ Another said, "The Chaplain must respect the ability of the enlisted member of the team and give him the responsibility to do the job."¹⁴ One recommendation from the USAREUR and Seventh Army Conference reads:

Give the enlisted man more time for professional work by relieving him of performing menial tasks, such as janitorial duties, gardening and personal services. It was suggested that such tasks be performed by persons employed by the fund and supervised by the junior EM.¹⁵

¹³ Interview of NCO's, USACHCS, 1973.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ USAREUR and Seventh Army, Annual Conference, p. 2.

The job utilization under the proposed reorganization of this career field is specifically outlined in the concept paper. It is new in many respects, therefore, I will present it in total in this paper.

For the Religious Education Specialist it reads as follows:

At the 20 and 40 skill levels, the Religious Education Specialist operates audio visual equipment, teaches religious classes, assists in teacher training, schedules classes, coordinates administrative aspects of religious education programs, recruits volunteer workers, conducts group seminars and personal development activities, coordinates and provides leadership for youth programs, and coordinates with appropriate civilian agencies. At the 50 skill level, the Religious Education Specialist does long range planning for all religious education programs to include objectives, scope, resources required, milestone schedules and necessary coordination. Other tasks include supervision of all aspects of religious education programs, positive management of training programs such as teacher training, development of human interaction skills, and supervision of enlisted persons at the 20 and 40 skill levels.

For the Church Management Specialist:

At the 20 and 40 skill levels, the Church Management Specialist prepares chapels for services, assists in services as required, orders supplies and equipment, maintains rosters and files, receives and accounts for offerings, maintains attendance records, prepares SOP for facilities and equipment maintenance, supervises use of facilities and coordinates religious displays.

For the Religious Activities Specialist:

At the 20 and 40 skill levels, the Religious Activities Specialist is responsible for scheduling religious activities and insuring that a coordinated effort is made to provide religious coverage for all persons in the military community, recruits, trains and coordinates schedules for ushers, acolytes and other volunteers who assist in religious services, plays the piano, organ, or other musical instruments as appropriate, assists with religious drama programs, recruits choir members, participates in the choir or directs the choir as appropriate, conducts long range planning for music/drama activities, coordinates boy/girl scout activities which relate to the chapel, serves as the religious activities point of contact in troop units, schedules and coordinates religious retreats, coordinates lay programs such as Men of the Chapel, Women of the Chapel, Youth of the Chapel, and coordinates the religious census.

For the Church Management Specialist:

At the 50 skill level, The Church Management Specialist assumes supervisory responsibility for both Church Management and Religious Activities programs. The Church Management Specialist recommends

assignments for enlisted persons in the 20 and 40 skill levels, manages office procedures, evaluates personnel and program effectiveness, trains lay leaders, coordinates organizational development training, develops adequate administrative procedures to insure effective religious programs, participates in program and budget development, and serves as custodian of the Chaplain NAF.

The Non-Professional Counselor does the following:

Through a series of progressively responsible assignments, the Non-Professional Counselor handles those types of counseling which do not require the personal attention of the chaplain, which are often routine in nature, which involve helping persons by referral. He analyzes the needs of persons and determines where they can best get help. He provides routine information regarding weddings, baptisms, funerals and other special activities, collects and analyzes counseling data, administers appropriate tests and questionnaires, maintains a counseling schedule, coordinated group counseling sessions, and¹⁶ if appropriate, serves as a co-trainer for group training.

It is clear the goal of this proposal and from the other comments registered the enlisted member of the chaplain team has much to offer. He can free the chaplain to accomplish his unique task of ministry. This kind of utilization is in complete accord with all who want an effective, efficient, and happy chaplain team.

¹⁶U.S., Chief of Chaplains, (Miscographed).

VI PROBLEM AREAS

Throughout a goodly portion of this paper I have mentioned an area that can preclude the effective working of the chaplain team. And that is the attitude of the chaplain towards the enlisted member of the team. This includes the willingness of the chaplain to allow the enlisted member to function in the fullest manner he can. It involves the willingness of the senior chaplain to allow the chaplain administrator to supervise and control other enlisted members of the chaplain team. It involves the willingness of the chaplain to go the second mile in insuring the enlisted member has the opportunity to improve his skills and abilities. The main point I wish to make is that the chaplain who allows the enlisted member to fully function will be the wise chaplain. He will have more time to accomplish his primary tasks and the administrative tasks will, more than likely, be fulfilled in a far more efficient and effective manner.

Another problem area at the present moment rests in career management and personnel assignment with the enlisted member of the team. At this time there isn't any management. One NCO I interviewed said, "There is very little management of the 71M, assignments are unclear and haphazard, there is resentment amongst the troops."¹⁷ One particular area of concern here

¹⁷ Interview of NCO's, USACHCS, 1973.

rested with certain key assignments that are presently filled with other than 71M career field personnel, e.g. the CSM of USAGHCS and the First Sergeant of HQ Company USAGHCS.¹⁸ What the senior NCO's I interviewed would wish to see is an individual in assignments who is knowledgeable of the 71M field and possesses a vested interest in it himself to audit and match people with particular assignments. Their point is well taken in my opinion.

A final problem area and a very large one is the retention and attraction of high caliber personnel in the 71M career field. In my opinion we are in for trouble if we don't adopt something like the proposal coming from the Chief of Chaplain's office. This is not to say we don't have outstanding personnel in the field now - we do! But the fact remains there is resentment among those who are interested in contributing to the military community. This resentment need not exist. In fact if it persists we may find the going more difficult in the future than it is now. Hopefully this will not be the case.

¹⁸ Ibid.

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